

Being so thrilled and excited in the last minute of decision he forgot or didn't take time to write to Peter M. and tell him of the change in arrangements, and his decision to go to America. It took six weeks to cross the ocean and by the time Peter M. received a letter back from his folks some twelve to fifteen weeks later, he was very bitter toward the Mormon people. He had decided that the Mormons had kidnapped his people, not hearing from them in such a long time. All the letters and Missionary visits to him would not change his mind, he would have no more to do with the Mormons. He kept the carpenter business and the family belongings and stayed in Switzerland.

They were three months crossing the plains, to reach Salt Lake City, September 22, 1861. He walked all the way in those little Sunday shoes and they lasted the whole long trip. Of course, he took them off to wade through the streams and helped to carry others across.

When they reached Salt Lake City, flour was selling for twenty-five dollars a hundred pounds and wheat for eight dollars a bushel. That was hard for them, having left all their earthly possessions in Switzerland. They made their home in Cottonwood, where they helped to build up that place for a time—then President Brigham Young called them to help settle and build Midway, Utah.

Peter Galli was a skilled carpenter, cabinet builder—he made many tables, chairs, chests, and cupboards with fancy trimmings. Also made fancy trimmings with which to decorate and beautify the homes he built. He used wooden pegs for nails in his work. He made thousands of combs he sold to the stores and friends.

Peter Galli loved the church and did all he could to help build up the church and Kingdom of God. He was a High Priest and did a great deal of temple work in the old Endowment House, many times walking to Salt Lake from Midway to do that work. He was a ward teacher until his death. He was helping to build the old German Hall in Midway where he caught a very bad cold that turned into pneumonia and caused his death.

### DR. JOHN GERBER

Dr. John Gerber was born September 8, 1796 in Schangnau, Bern, Switzerland, a



son of John and Susannah Indermuehle Gerber.

He first married Magdeline Haug and she and her baby died in childbirth May 22, 1826 and were buried in Bahama Island near West Africa. He next married Maria Elizabeth Wagner on October 17, 1827, and she also died in childbirth December 15, 1828. In Sierra-Leone, West Africa, he married Johanna Elenora Sessing on January 8, 1830. She and a baby Fredrick died September 12, 1842. His last wife was Anna Maria Ackert, whom he married in St. Louis in 1843. She was born May 11, 1824 near Lake Zurich, Switzerland.

Dr. Gerber died in Midway, November 22, 1870. Anna Maria Gerber died February 11, 1912 at Maeser, Uintah County, at the home of a daughter.

Dr. John Gerber was a pioneer of 1854. His parents were well educated and of the so-called Swiss upper class.

He received an excellent education in his youth, and early in life developed a love for the spiritual, and prepared for the ministry. He attended the University of Bern, and at the age of twenty-three was admitted to the local Lutheran Missionary School at Basel. For three years he engaged in theological training preparatory for the ministry; also busied himself in the study of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin receiving special recognition for his mastery of the same. He was accomplished in French, English, and his native tongue—German. He studied medicine and surgery in France which was required of all who aspired to the missionary labor.

On the 13th of January 1822, at the Collegiate Church at Stuttgart, he received from his most distinguished prelate Dr. Flatt the ordination of the Protestant Lutheran Church and thereafter entered the services of the English Bishopric Missionary Society of London. From London he was sent as a

medicine, and did whatever additional work he could to provide a living for his family. In 1861 they moved to Provo Valley, locating at the Upper Settlement. They were among the original settlers of the area. Here they established their first permanent home in Utah filing on an eighty-acre tract of land. The father with the help of his son, Louis, built a log room near a spring of good water, and together with the help of the older children proceeded to cultivate his acreage raising wheat, potatoes, and other garden vegetables. He also practiced medicine, receiving produce in exchange for his services. Their two youngest children were born at Mound City; Sarah Elisabeth June 2, 1861, and Emily Adelia (Watkins) October 12, 1864.

In June 1867, Dr. Gerber leased his property at Mound City, and moved his family to Salt Lake City, where he devoted his entire time to the practice of medicine, and succeeded very well. In Salt Lake City he was a member of the School of the Prophets. In September, 1870 the Gerbers returned to Mound City. Late in October Dr. Gerber was taken seriously ill and steadily grew worse, until he died November 22, 1870. A few weeks before his death he called his family to his bedside and gave each one counsel, and reproof where he felt it was needed, and then gave his father's blessing to his children in turn as to age, and included all grandchildren who were present.

"Before his death, he gave one of the strongest testimonies of the truth of the Latter-day work, that man can express with words, which point he wished me (John Huber) to be particular not to omit. The above the Doctor told me before he died and desired me to report to the News. Few men have departed this life more peaceably than he did." (Deseret News, December 1, 1870)

Dr. Gerber was buried in the Upper Settlement cemetery on the foothills northwest of Midway. A pioneer memorial has been erected in Midway as a tribute to Dr. Gerber and all those buried in the old cemetery.

After her husband's death, Anna Maria struggled with poor health, but after about 1873 was able to take on work as a midwife to support the family. She became very proficient in her work and was called to many parts of the valley to assist in births or in any form of sickness. She was even called upon to care for sick animals.

One wintry night a knock came on the door, and she opened it to find a nervous, expectant father. "Come quick, Mother Gerber, my wife is having a baby," he exclaimed. Then he was so excited that he jumped on his buckboard and drove off into the night, leaving Anna Maria to walk three miles through the snow.

She took an active part in Relief Society, and served as nurse and midwife for more than 25 years, usually receiving only produce as compensation.

During the latter years of her life she lived at the homes of some of her children. She lacked three months of being 88 at the time of her death.

Dr. Gerber and his second wife had one living child, Mrs. Owen (Maria Sussana Wilhemia) Cole.

The children of Dr. Gerber and his third wife include:

John, Louis and Fredrick.  
The children of Dr. John and Anna Maria Gerber were:

Julia Carolina died as a child  
Mrs. Ira (Julia Jemeyma) Jacob  
Mrs. Joseph (Hellenia Elenora) Jacob  
Anna Poulana died as a child  
Benjamin Ulrich died as a child  
Moroni married Emily Jane Jacob  
Mrs. Isaac (Mary Matilda) Jacob  
Sarah Elizabeth died as a child  
Mrs. Arthur (Emily Adelia) Watkins.

### JOHN T. GERBER

John Theophilus Gerber, pioneer of 1854, born April 7, 1837, Basel, Green County, Ohio, son of Dr. John and Johanna Eleonora Sessing Gerber. He was baptized a member of the Latter-day Saints Church in April 1854, and came to Utah with his father and other members of the family, arriving in Great Salt Lake Valley October 6, 1854. After a short stay the Gerber family traveled to the southern part of the state, while young John T. remained in the city, and went to work for President Brigham Young.

Six years later he received a call to serve as a missionary in Switzerland, his father's native land. He left in the early autumn of 1860, and after nearly four years service was released. During his return trip home he married Anna Mary Rupp, August 28, 1864, and he with his bride came to Utah in Captain Wm. Hyde's ox train, arriving in the Valley October 26, 1864.

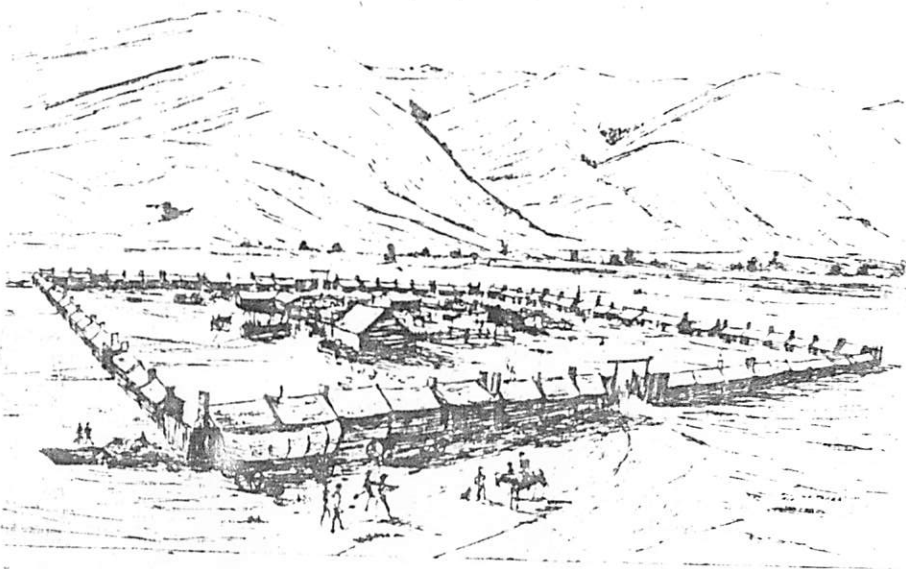
way was soon laid out with a public square in the center and ample city blocks surrounding the square.

Then began the work of "forting in." Around the central square some 75 primitive dirt-roofed log cabins sprang into existence, some abutting against each other, while between others were erected strong panels of upright posts. In this manner an impregnable wall was formed around the square. Small windows were provided at strategic points to serve as portholes in case of attack. Life in the new fort-string was conducted under military law, with officers and picket patrols acting at the bugler, John Watkins.

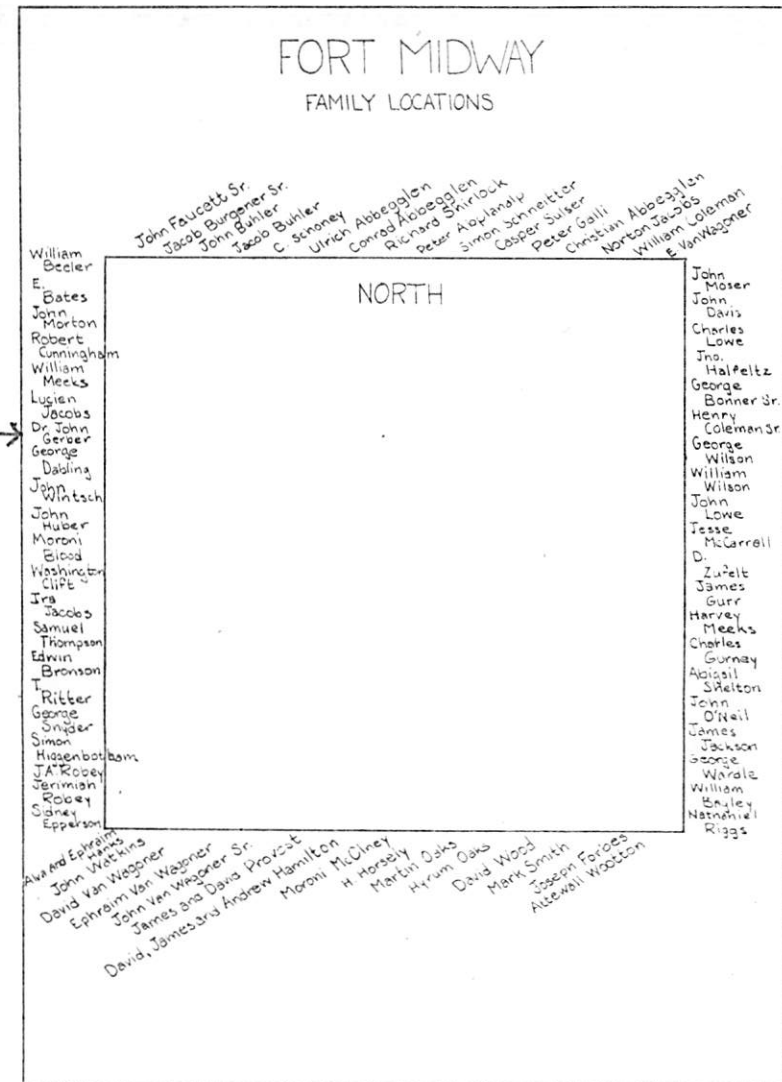
Fort Midway brought to the people a sense of well provided security, by bringing them close together helped develop a new harmony and community spirit. Fortunately, the fort was never attacked. The settlers were ready to defend their lives and homes at any time. The fact that the fort was not molested speaks highly of the ability of the pioneers to cooperate in community projects.

The first 75 families in the old fort and their locations are as follows:

From the southwest to the northwest corner: Sidney H. Epperson, Jeremiah Robey, J. A. Robey, Simon Higgenbotham, George Snyder, Thomas Ritter, Edwin Bronson, Samuel Thompson, Ira Jacobs, Washington Clift, Moroni Blood, John Huber, John Wintsch, George Dabling.



An artist's sketch by Bill Whitaker depicting the establishment of Fort Midway in 1866



A sketch depicting the location of family homes in Fort Midway at its establishment.

Dr. John Gerber, Lucian Jacobs, William Meeks, Robert Cunningham, John Morton, Ezekial Bates, William Beeler.

From the northwest to the northeast corner: John Faucett, Sr., Jacob Burgener Sr., John Buhler, Jacob Buhler, Christian Schoney, Ulrich Abegglen, Conrad Abegglen, Richard Sherlock, Peter Abplanalp, Simon Schneitter, Casper Sulser, Peter Galli, Christian Abegglen, Norton Jacobs, William Coleman and Mrs. Elizabeth Van Wagoner.

118 South  
American F  
August 15,



R. Raymond Green, M.D.  
375 East 200 North  
Heber City, Utah 84032

Dear Dr. Green:

We appreciate your interest in the history of Midway. We have made a copy of the biography of Dr. John Gerber and of his wife Anna Maria Gerber and we are enclosing it for you. We hope you find it of interest and that you will be able to use it or parts of it.

My wife and I, along with many of the descendants of Dr. John Gerber, have worked to preserve the little cemetery where Dr. Gerber and others are buried. We have sought to have it set aside as an historical site.

We would appreciate any help you could give on this project. You might contact Mr. James J. Smedley, an attorney in Heber City, who has given us some assistance.

We send our good wishes to you.

Yours very truly,

*E. Ray Gardner*  
*Stella Gerber Gardner*





# A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN GERBER and ANNA MARIA GERBER

By his son, MORRIS GERBER

Dr. John Gerber was born of well-to-do parents on Sept. 8,

1794 in Switzerland and this was the birthplace

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returned to London.

Shortly after this tragedy, Dr. Gerber

While there he met Maria Elizabeth Wagner. They were married Oct. 17,

1827. Again, they sailed for Africa. On Dec. 15, 1828, a daughter

was born to them and again the mother died in childbirth. The

baby lived and was named Maria Susanna Wilhelmina.

Dr. Gerber continued his labors as minister and doctor, also

serving as school teacher. On Jan. 8, 1830 he married Johanna

Eleonora Seasing at Sierra Leone, West Africa. Ten years of his

life were spent in this unhealthy climate and they had most trying

times. Finally, after being afflicted with yellow fever, he recov-

ered sufficiently to return to London.

took up 80 acres  
Upper Settlement  
old Smoke Creek

John Gerber

\* Winter 1864-5

1866-7 moved to Fort String

1868- moved to St

1870 Fall moved back to Midway

+ Nov 22 1870

Burial Ground Cemetery

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The next evening the meeting began, but Sarah was much too busy to attend. However, as she worked, the sound of the elders singing floated down the hall to her, *How Firm a Foundation Ye Saints of the Lord*. She found herself pausing to listen. There was more singing and then the missionaries began to speak. What they said had a ring of real truth and authority. By the time the meeting ended she ran and told her husband about it, saying, "If they hold another meeting here you must come and hear them."

They did hold another meeting the very next evening which Sarah and Edward attended. The two young men looked like angels to her as they explained the first principles of the gospel. Edward caught the same spirit and so together they began to pray, study and discuss the new religion. Soon all the family who were old enough were ready for baptism. Edward was the first to be baptized on Sept. 17, 1848. By the middle of October all the family, with the exception of the three youngest children, had been baptized.

The family was active in the branch for about five years. They were anxious to gather with the Saints in Utah so sold their place of business and made preparations for the journey to America. They left the Bramley Moor Docks in Liverpool, England, in the spring of 1853 in a sailing boat bound for the United States. After three months on the ocean they landed at New Orleans, Louisiana. Here they bought a cook stove and a few other pieces of furniture, which they shipped up the Mississippi River to Council Bluffs, Iowa, on a freight boat. The family went on a passenger boat and waited at Council Bluffs for the freight to arrive.

The weather was quite good and everyone enjoyed the trip. They danced in the evenings, told stories, sang songs, and held their meetings on Sundays. Even the blind father, Edward, endured the trip patiently, without complaining. They all felt that everything would be wonderful once they were settled in Utah. Soon after they entered the mountains, however, Edward became ill with mountain fever. They did all they could for him, but he grew weaker day by day and on the evening of September 7, 1853, as his family were making camp for the night, he passed away, leaving his sorrowing wife and young family to make their way alone. They were at that time in Wyoming, but because he had so wanted to come to Utah his family decided to carry him across the Bear River and bury him in Utah soil. He was buried on the west bank of the Bear River near what is known as the Needles, a little southwest of Evanston. The family carried rocks and piled them on top of the grave, then collected a large

pile of sagebrush and burned it over the grave to try to kill any scent that might have attracted wild animals.

—Doritt Harvey Brough

*Christen Christensen* was born November 10, 1769, in Stenbroen, Denmark. When he was 83 years old the younger members of the family accepted the gospel and were baptized. He was not immediately ready but continued uninterrupted to read the Bible and compare its contents closely with the tracts distributed by the Mormons. One autumn day he called his son's wife to his bedside and told her that he now wanted to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through baptism. This, which he coveted, soon became a reality. Peter Christen Jensen, his grandson, together with another brother, carried him approximately one thousand feet down a hill to a small stream of water where Elder Mads Christen Jensen performed the baptism. Immediately the brethren reached their hands forward to help him out of the water but he refused their assistance and sprang up the steep bank by his own power.

When the time finally came for him to emigrate to the land of the Saints he was so eager to get started that he couldn't wait for the wagon to be loaded but ran ahead of the party several miles toward Aalborg. However, it was not his destiny to reach Zion. He died during the voyage up the Mississippi River the day before the ship arrived in New Orleans and was buried with others after the ship docked. —Oak Camp, Brigham City, Utah

#### THE PRICE OF PIONEERING—1854

In the year 1854, ten sailing ships were chartered by the Latter-day Saints to bring their people to New Orleans. From the files of the D.U.P. we read the story of *John Gerber*, a Swiss emigrant, who was a former minister for the Lutheran Church. He and his wife and his father *Johannes Gerber* were baptized in 1852, and were helped on their trek to Utah by the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. The journey was very trying owing to the poor health of Johannes whose great desire was to live to see the Salt Lake Valley. As the company came in sight of the Valley, he asked to be helped from his bed and after seeing the Valley, he remarked: "I am satisfied and ready to go." On arriving at Emigration Square that night he quietly passed away.

When *Eliza Shelton Keeler* was fourteen years of age, she, with her brothers and sisters, started the journey for Utah. There were two brothers and four sisters in their party. Measles broke out in the camp and all except her sister, Ann, and her brother, Charles, suffered from the effects of the disease. They had hardly recovered when they were stricken with cholera. *Charles*, his wife *Rebecca*, and five of their six children died and were buried along

service, a message came to her that her husband had contracted the disease. She hurried to his side only to see him die in great agony twenty minutes later!

And, so it was that a brave soul, 63 years of age—a stranger in a strange land, except for her son in far-away Utah—faced the long journey alone. Because there were ten to each emigrant wagon, she walked much of the way, often arising early to walk ahead of the wagons. At one time, when she had gone ahead alone, she was mistaken for an antelope, and barely missed being shot. She reached Utah, and was reunited with her son in September, 1854. Before she took off her bonnet, she ran to pick up her motherless little granddaughter, Julia.

During the remainder of her life in Salt Lake City, "Mother Winter" endeared herself to all who knew her by her unselfish service to those who needed her. Her faithful, gentle nursing brought cheer to many of the sick who were unable to pay her, and her skilled care started many an infant upon its journey in life. Once more she was married—to fine, old Dr. Hughes, whose patients she had helped to nurse. He died about a year later.

Possessed of remarkable vitality, she scarcely knew illness herself. In all her seventy-seven years she never tired of her willing service to others, often saying she would rather "wear out than rust out." She died in 1868, leaving a heritage, which I, for one, am proud to share.

—Ruby K. Smith.

### "READY TO GO"

John Gerber was born in Switzerland in 1796. His parents were well educated and of the so-called upper class. Early in his life he developed a love for the spiritual, and prepared for the ministry, which included a study of medicine and surgery. After graduation he was sent as a minister to the negro colonies in West Africa where he labored ten years for the Lutheran Church. He was forced to leave his post because of a severe attack of yellow fever, and came to the United States in 1834.

He was married four times, three of his wives died during his missionary labors. He was living in Basel, Ohio, where he married his fourth wife, Anna Marie Ackeret, about 1843. In 1852, he and his wife and his father, Johannes Gerber, were baptized into the L. D. S. Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dr. John lost his position as minister and, of course, the pay for preaching, also his clientele as a practicing physician because of his acceptance of Mormonism. To add to their distress their beautiful home was burned including all their earthly possessions. Their faith was put to a severe test. They sought the aid of their Church

and were helped on their trek to Utah by the Perpetual Emigration Fund. At the time of emigrating to Utah the family consisted of grandfather, father, mother, and five children Julia, Ellen, Mary, John and Lois, the last three being the children of the third wife. Johannes Gerber, was in poor health. The journey across the plains and through the mountains was very trying owing to the elder Gerber's illness and the hardships incident to that slow, hot trek. Johannes, the grandfather's great desire, often expressed, was to live to see the Salt Lake Valley. This was granted him for as soon as the company came in sight of the Valley, he asked to be helped from his bed to which he had been confined so long, "so I can see the Land of Zion." After taking in the sights for which he had longed for the privilege of beholding, he remarked: "I am satisfied and ready to go." After arriving on Emigration Square that night he quietly "crossed the bar."

After the grandfather's burial, the family were taken south with a family going to Dixie. The father, John, trained only for the ministry, worked at any job he could find, living at Cedar City, Fillmore, and in Washington County until about 1862, when they moved to upper Provo Valley establishing their first permanent home in Utah when they filed on an eighty-acre piece of land.

Pioneer life was harsh, winters were extremely cold and food was scarce. In the late Fall of 1870, Dr. John Gerber passed away leaving his widow with 3 children. In 1873, Anna Marie began going out as a midwife, having learned from her husband to care for those needing such help. In this field she was very successful and as there was no doctor in Wasatch County at that time, she was called to every town in the county to attend all serious cases or sickness of any kind. She made no difference or inquiry as to the ability to pay but that it was her duty to give her help wherever needed. She served the sick for seven years until her health broke. She spent her remaining years living with her children until she passed away at Maeser, Utah, May 11, 1912.

—Files of D. U. P.

### FROM THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS FRANKLIN KING

I was born in Mantua, Portage County, Ohio, a son of Thomas Jefferson King and Rebecca E. Olin. My parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in September, 1830. They both died in the year 1876. They were intimately acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum. They bought a quarter section of land near the Temple lot in Jackson County, Missouri. They, also, passed through the trials and persecutions that were heaped upon the Saints in the early rise of the Church.

In 1845, they moved from Ohio to Illinois. Here they bought a farm at Morleys Settlement, a short distance from Nauvoo, and raised one crop when they were told by their neighbors that the mob



*The Middle Ground*

Provo Valley's first settlement was hardly a summer old before vigorous pioneers had moved into outlying areas and laid the foundations for other community developments.

One of the significant developments that began in the summer of 1852 was along Snake Creek in the northwest part of the valley. Though no centralized settlements were made at first, such pioneers as Jesse McCarroll, Benjamin Mark Smith and Sidney Harmon Epperson began building homes along the creek.

They chose the location because of its warmth and beauty. Warm springs that abounded in the locale made the soil highly productive. Being near the base of the Wasatch Mountains and in view of majestic Mt. Timpanogos, the settlers felt the peace, beauty and strength of the hills.

During that first summer a crop of grain was planted in the choice lands along Snake Creek by McCarroll, Smith and Epperson along with Jeremiah Robey, David Wood and Edwin Bronson.

The crop was successful and it stimulated the building of more permanent cabins and corrals along the creek. There were four families that spent the winter of 1859-60 along Snake Creek.

As Spring arrived in 1860 so did an influx of new settlers for the Snake Creek area. There were soon enough families for two community areas, which became known as the upper and lower settlements.

The upper settlement was situated on both sides of Snake Creek, immediately below the junction of that stream with White Pine Creek. This is about two miles above the present site of Midway. Because of the numerous limestone formations found in the area, this settlement soon became known as Mound City. Some of the first settlers were Peter Shirts, John and Ephraim Hanks and a Mr. Riggs.

The lower Snake Creek settlement was about a mile and a half south of the present city of Midway. Though it was settled first it remained the smaller of the two settlements.

Growth of the two Snake Creek communities continued slowly, but by 1861 there were many new settlers from the Provo and American Fork areas who had decided to establish homes along the creek. Most of them chose the upper settlement, which grew to be the largest. However, it was in the lower settlement that John H. Van Wagoner chose to build the first flour grist mill in Provo Valley. Even though the mill

*"How Beautiful upon the Mts p. 541"*

*Our Dr John Henderson*

was crude it was still another step forward in making the new valley more livable.

The time of planting and harvesting in 1861 came and went and the snows of another winter fell on more than 50 families who comprised the Snake River settlements. Then as the summer of 1862 arrived there was sufficient community spirit between the two groups that the first meeting house in the area was constructed. It was built of logs with a dirt roof and floor and was erected in the upper settlement, or Mound City. It was completed in time for the July 24th celebration. As it was nearing completion, the Presiding Bishop of the valley, Joseph S. Murdock of Heber, appointed Sidney Harmon Epperson to be presiding elder of the upper settlement. The lower settlement of more than 20 families was designated as a teacher's district of the upper settlement.

Elder Epperson was sustained in a meeting on June 26, 1862. He chose as his counselors John Fausett and Samuel Thompson. His calling as presiding elder proved him to be a man of faith and courage. He felt the responsibility of leadership and strove for unity among his people.

Side by side he worked with them in grubbing willows and sage brush, breaking land and making irrigation ditches, constructing roads, digging dugways to the canyons for fire wood, blasting rock and bridging streams.

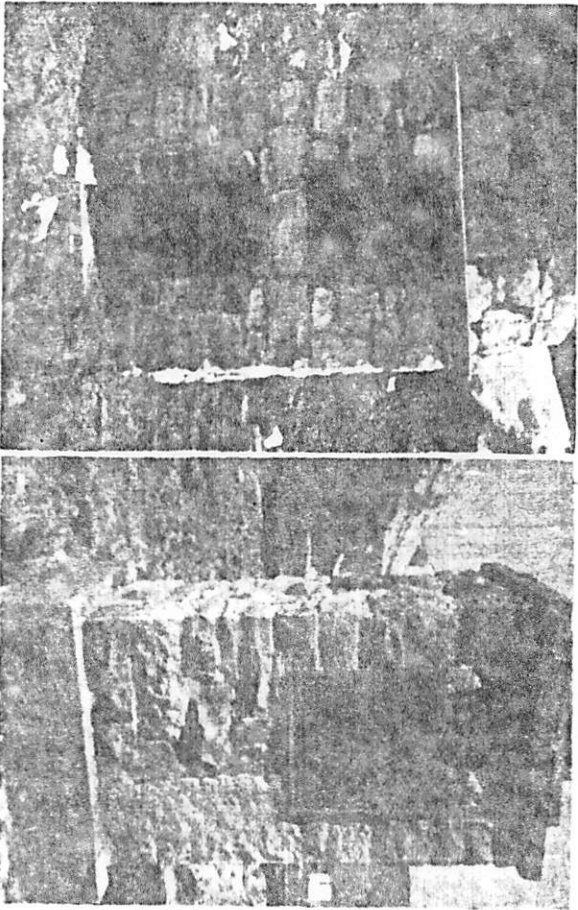
Pioneering for the early Snake Creek settlers was a full-time job, 24 hours every day. However, by 1866 the lives of the people were further complicated with Indian problems. Restless red-men resented the encroachment by white men on their favorite hunting and trapping grounds, and often threatened the security of the new settlers. So, early in 1866 plans were made to abandon the rambling settlements along Snake Creek.

The axiom that there is "strength in numbers" and the wisdom of compromise are probably the two most important factors underlying the establishment of Midway, the thriving community that grew out of the two Snake Creek settlements.

The Indian troubles of 1866 made the settlers and leaders aware that the sprawling Snake Creek settlements would be highly vulnerable to the type of attacks being used by the Indians.

So it was that the upper and lower settlements on Snake Creek were advised to come together as one community. Tradition has it, however, that a warm contest ensued as to which community should join which. Each saw the virtue of their own position and desired not to move. However, a compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements, and the new site was called, appropriately enough, Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was a survey of the area. With Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carrying the tapes and J. K. Smith and Atwell Wootton Sr., the pegs, the city of Mid-



The Midway Lime Kiln Monument. Midway—The inscription reads: "Hawthorne Camp of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Wasatch County, Utah. Erected 1955. Lime Kiln. In 1875 William Van Wagoner and his brother John Sr., built this lime kiln. They operated it for many years. Lime rock was quarried by blasting it into chunks. Twenty-five tons of rock produced 8 tons of lime. Three days and three nights of 12-hour shifts, steadily burning at top heat were required to burn out the lime. It cooled 48 hours before being removed. Lime was used in mortar, plaster and for white-washing. Much of the lime was sold to the Ontario Mining Co. of Park City at 50c a bushel delivered. The kiln was abandoned in 1922."

The First Midway Cemetery Monument, Midway—The inscription reads: "Erected by Hawthorne Camp, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Pioneer Cemetery. Erected 1957. One and one half miles northwest is Mound City Cemetery, the first burial place of the community. It was used from 1859 to 1869. The following people were buried there: Robert and Margaret Wright, Dr. John Gerber, Sarah Gerber, Julia Gerber Jacobs and baby, John Gerd Mohlman and infant son John Mohlman, Jr., John, the son of John and Clara Van Wagoner Sr., infant son of Mr. and Mrs. John Huber Sr., baby of Moroni and Melissa Blood, Roswell Blood Sr., Mary Jane Marsh, baby of James and Melissa Wilson, Anna and Elizabeth, twin daughters of Conrad and Elizabeth Abegglen, child of Ellen G. Thornton, children of Mr. and Mrs. Ulrich Abegglen and Lon Swazy."

#### DUP Monument in front of Jerry Gertsch Home in Midway, Utah

One and one half miles northwest was Mound City Cemetery, the first burial place of this community, used from 1859 until 1869. The following people were buried there: Robert and Margaret Wright; Dr. John Gerber and Sarah Gerber; Julia Gerber Jacobs and baby; John Gerd Mohlman & infant son, John Mohlman Jr.; Orson, son of John & Clara Van Wagoner Sr.; infant son of Mr. and Mrs. John Huber Sr.; baby of Moroni & Melissa Blood; Roswell Blood Sr.; Mary Jane Marsh; baby of James & Melissa Wilson; Anna & Elizabeth, twin daughters of Conrad & Elizabeth Abegglen, child of Ellen G. Thornton; children of Mr. & Mrs. Ulrich Abegglen, and Lon Swazy.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*The Middle Ground*

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*On Br John Van Wagoner*

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The time of planting and harvesting in 1861 came and went and the snows of another winter fell on more than 50 families who comprised the Snake River settlements. Then as the summer of 1862 arrived there was sufficient community spirit between the two groups that the first meeting house in the area was constructed. It was built of logs with a dirt roof and floor and was erected in the upper settlement, or Mound City. It was completed in time for the July 24th celebration. As it was nearing completion, the Presiding Bishop of the valley, Joseph S. Murdock of Heber, appointed Sidney Harmon Epperson to be presiding elder of the upper settlement. The lower settlement of more than 20 families was designated as a teacher's district of the upper settlement.

Elder Epperson was sustained in a meeting on June 26, 1862. He chose as his counselors John Fausett and Samuel Thompson. His calling as presiding elder proved him to be a man of faith and courage. He felt the responsibility of leadership and strove for unity among his people.

Side by side he worked with them in grubbing willows and sage brush, breaking land and making irrigation ditches, constructing roads, digging dugways to the canyons for fire wood, blasting rock and bridging streams.

Pioneering for the early Snake Creek settlers was a full-time job, 24 hours every day. However, by 1866 the lives of the people were further complicated with Indian problems. Restless red-men resented the encroachment by white men on their favorite hunting and trapping grounds, and often threatened the security of the new settlers. So, early in 1866 plans were made to abandon the rambling settlements along Snake Creek.

The axiom that there is "strength in numbers" and the wisdom of compromise are probably the two most important factors underlying the establishment of Midway, the thriving community that grew out of the two Snake Creek settlements.

The Indian troubles of 1866 made the settlers and leaders aware that the sprawling Snake Creek settlements would be highly vulnerable to the type of attacks being used by the Indians.

So it was that the upper and lower settlements on Snake Creek were advised to come together as one community. Tradition has it, however, that a warm contest ensued as to which community should join which. Each saw the virtue of their own position and desired not to move. However, a compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements, and the new site was called, appropriately enough, Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was a survey of the area. With Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carrying the tapes and a F. L. Smith and A. H. Waller carrying the poles, the city of Mid-

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *The Middle Ground*

Provo Valley's first settlement was hardly a summer old before vigorous pioneers had moved into outlying areas and laid the foundations for other community developments.

One of the significant developments that began in the summer of 1859 was along Snake Creek in the northwest part of the valley. Though no centralized settlements were made at first, such pioneers as Jesse McCarroll, Benjamin Mark Smith and Sidney Harmon Epperson began building homes along the creek.

They chose the location because of its warmth and beauty. Warm springs that abounded in the locale made the soil highly productive. Being near the base of the Wasatch Mountains and in view of majestic Mt. Timpanogos, the settlers felt the peace, beauty and strength of the hills.

During that first summer a crop of grain was planted in the choice lands along Snake Creek by McCarroll, Smith and Epperson along with Jeremiah Robey, David Wood and Edwin Bronson.

The crop was successful and it stimulated the building of more permanent cabins and corrals along the creek. There were four families that spent the winter of 1859-60 along Snake Creek.

As Spring arrived in 1860 so did an influx of new settlers for the Snake Creek area. There were soon enough families for two community areas, which became known as the upper and lower settlements.

The upper settlement was situated on both sides of Snake Creek, immediately below the junction of that stream with White Pine Creek. This is about two miles above the present site of Midway. Because of the numerous limestone formations found in the area, this settlement soon became known as Mound City. Some of the first settlers were Peter Shirts, John and Ephraim Hanks and a Mr. Riggs.

The lower Snake Creek settlement was about a mile and a half south of the present city of Midway. Though it was settled first it remained the smaller of the two settlements.

Growth of the two Snake Creek communities continued slowly, but by 1861 there were many new settlers from the Provo and American Fork areas who had decided to establish homes along the creek. Most of them chose the upper settlement, which grew to be the largest. However, it was in the lower settlement that John H. Van Wagoner chose to build the first flour grist mill in Provo Valley. Even though the mill



was crude it was still another step forward in making the new valley more livable.

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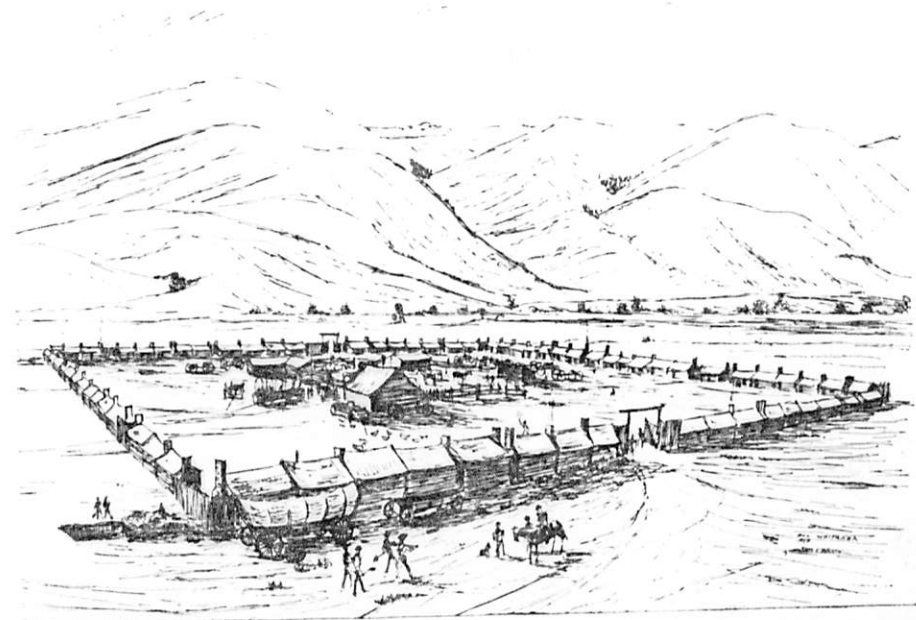
way was soon laid out with a public square in the center and ample city blocks surrounding the square.

Then began the work of "forting in." Around the central square some 75 primitive dirt-roofed log cabins sprang into existence, some abutting against each other, while between others were erected strong panels of upright posts. In this manner an impregnable wall was formed around the square. Small windows were provided at strategic points to serve as portholes in case of attack. Life in the new fort-string was conducted under military law, with officers and picket patrols acting at the call of the bugler, John Watkins.

Fort Midway brought to the people a sense of well provided security, and by bringing them close together helped develop a new happiness and community spirit. Fortunately, the fort was never attacked, though the settlers were ready to defend their lives and homes at any time. The fact that the fort was not molested speaks highly of the ability of the pioneers to cooperate in community projects.

The first 75 families in the old fort and their locations are as follows:

From the southwest to the northwest corner: Sidney H. Epperson, Jeremiah Robey, J. A. Robey, Simon Higgenbotham, George Snyder, Thomas Ritter, Edwin Bronson, Samuel Thompson, Ira Jacobs, Washington Clift, Moroni Blood, John Huber, John Wintsch, George Dabling,



An artist's sketch by Bill Whitaker depicting the establishment of Fort Midway in 1866.